

# Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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## **1. India and Spain agreed to cooperate in digital infra, climate action, clean energy ( Feb. 16, 2023 )**

digital infrastructure, climate action, clean energy and sustainable development  
Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and his **Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez** on February 15 agreed to collaborate on issues such as **digital infrastructure, climate action, clean energy and sustainable development.**

### **An overview of the news**

- They also discussed several bilateral and international issues of **mutual interest.**
- They reviewed bilateral initiatives and expressed satisfaction at the growing cooperation in the **defence, economic and commercial sectors.**
- Sanchez extended full support to India's initiative of chairing the **global bloc G20.**

### **India-Spain Relations**

- Relations between the two countries have been cordial since the establishment of **diplomatic relations in 1956.**
- To give impetus to trade and investment ties, the **India-Spain Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation (JCEC)** was established in **1972.**
- The commission was established under the **Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement** and has met ten times since then.
- Spain is India's **7th largest trading partner** in the European Union.
- **India's exports to Spain** include organic chemicals, textiles, iron and steel products, motor vehicle components, marine products and leather goods.
- Spain is the **15th largest investor** in India.

### **Bilateral Agreements between India and Spain**

- Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, 1972
- Agreement on Cultural Cooperation, 1982
- Civil Aviation Agreement, 1986
- Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, 1993
- Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement, 1997
- Extradition Treaty, 2002
- MoU on Institutionalisation of Political Dialogue, 2006

## **2. Cabinet approves establishment of Agricultural Credit Societies ( Feb. 15, 2023 )**

### Agricultural Credit Societies

In order to strengthen the **cooperative sector**, the Union Cabinet on 15 February approved the **setting up of a new Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS)** in two lakh panchayats in the next five years.

### **An overview of the news**

- According to the government, **25 different facilities** will be made available through the Primary Agricultural Credit Society.
- **Dairy and fisheries** will also be linked to agricultural cooperatives.
- In the next 5 years, a target has been set to establish **2 lakh multipurpose packs, dairy, fisheries cooperatives.**
- The scheme will be implemented with convergence of **various schemes.**
- The scheme will be implemented with convergence of various schemes by leveraging the **'Whole of Government' approach.**

### **Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS)**

- These are grassroots level cooperative credit institutions that provide short-term and medium-term agricultural loans to farmers for various agricultural and agricultural activities.
- It works at the **gram Panchayat and village level.**
- The first Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) was **set up in 1904.**
- PACS are registered under the **Co-operative Societies Act and regulated by RBI.**

### **Objectives of PACS**

- Raise capital for the purpose of making loans
- Supporting members' essential activities
- Collect deposits from members with the goal of improving their savings habit
- Arrange for the supply and development of improved breeds of livestock to the members
- Supply agricultural inputs and services to members at reasonable prices

## **3. Cabinet approves Centrally Sponsored Scheme- “Vibrant Villages Programme” for the Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26 ( Feb. 15, 2023 )**

### Vibrant Villages Programme

The Union Cabinet on 15 February approved the Centrally Sponsored Scheme- **“Vibrant**

**Villages Programme” (VVP) for the Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26 with financial allocation of Rs 4800 Crore.**

### **An overview of the news**

- This will help encourage people to stay in their native places in border areas.
- This will stop migration from villages and improve border security.
- Funds will be provided under the scheme for development of essential infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities in 19 districts and 46 border blocks, 4 states and 1 union territory along the northern land border of the country.
- In the first phase, 663 villages will be included in the programme.
- The District Administration will prepare a **Vibrant Village Action Plan** with the help of **Gram Panchayats**.
- **100 percent** saturation of Central and State schemes will be ensured.

### **About Vibrant Villages Programme**

- This program was announced in the budget **speech 2022**.
- It aims to improve infrastructure in villages along **India’s border with China**.
- Under the programme, states such as **Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh** will improve infrastructure and build residential and tourism hubs.
- The **focus areas of the programme** are livelihood, road connectivity, housing, rural infrastructure, renewable energy, television and broadband connections.

## **4. Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and Chile for cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors ( Feb. 15, 2023 )**

The **Union Cabinet** chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between the **Government of India and the Government of Chile** on 15 February for **cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors**.

### **An overview of the news**

- This MoU provides for cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors.
- Under the MoU, a **Chile-India Agricultural Working Group** will be set up.
- This group will be responsible for supervision, review and evaluation of the implementation of the MoU as well as for establishing frequent communication and coordination.
- The meetings of the Agriculture Working Group will be held once a year, alternately in **Chile and India**.

- The MoU shall come into force upon its signature and shall remain in force **for a period of five years from the date of execution.**
- Thereafter it will be automatically renewed for a period of **5 years.**

### **The main areas of cooperation**

- Agricultural Policies for the Development of Modern Agriculture
- Organic agriculture to facilitate bilateral trade of organic products
- To promote exchange of policies aimed at developing organic production
- Promotion of innovation in agriculture sector between Indian institutions and Chilean institutions
- Cooperation in Science and Innovation to Address Common Challenges

### **5. Indo-US exercise TARKASH ( Feb. 15, 2023 )**

Indo-US exercise TARKASH

The **6th edition of joint exercise Tarkash** was recently concluded in **Chennai** by the **National Security Guard (NSG) and the US Special Operations Force (SOF).**

#### **About Exercise TARKASH**

- This is the sixth edition of the exercise which began on **16 January and ended on 14 February.**
- It is a joint exercise by the **National Security Guard (NSG) and US Special Operations Forces (SOF).**
- **“Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Terror Response”** has been included in this exercise for the first time.
- An exercise to deal with **chemical and biological attacks** by terrorists was also included in the exercise.
- Chemical and biological attacks have been made part of the exercise in the backdrop of the **Russia-Ukraine war.**
- Last year, Russia accuses Ukraine of receiving aid from Western countries and of carrying out a chemical attack in **Kharkiv.**

#### **Objectives of the Exercise**

- The objective of the exercise is to neutralize the terrorists, safe release of hostages and neutralization of chemical weapons being carried by the terrorists.

#### **Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Weapons**

- These weapons are classified as **weapons of mass destruction (WMD).**

- In the past these weapons have been used by states and terrorist groups.
- The most recent use of CBRN was in the form of a sarin gas attack in **Syria in 2017** that killed over 100 people.
- These weapons are a serious threat to international peace and security.

### **Chemical, Biological and Radiological weapons**

- Chemical weapons include **mustard gas and nerve agents**.
- Biological agents like **anthrax, botulinum toxin and plague** are some examples of biochemical weapons.
- Radiological weapons include **weaponised radioactive waste and dirty bombs** as well as nuclear weapons.

## **6. Air India signs 470 aircraft deal with Airbus, Boeing ( Feb. 15, 2023 )**

Air India

With an aim to upgrade its fleet and expand its operations, **Tata-owned Air India** on 14 February confirmed an agreement to buy a total of **470 wide-body and narrow-body planes from Airbus and Boeing**.

### **An overview of the news**

- Of the 470 new aircraft ordered by Air India, **250 are from Airbus and 220 from Boeing**.
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has expressed confidence that India will emerge as the third largest global market in the aviation sector in the coming years.
- This deal reflects the strength of the **US-India economic partnership**.
- The Indian aviation sector will need more than **2,000 aircrafts** in the next 15 years.
- This historic deal shows strengthening of strategic partnership between India and France.
- This deal will help in fulfilling the growing demands of the aircrafts.
- Under the **regional connectivity scheme-UDAN**, the number of airports in the country has increased from **74 to 147 in the last eight years**.
- Remote parts of the country are being connected by air connectivity which has helped in socio-economic development.

### **About UDAN scheme**

- **Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)** was launched in **2016** as a **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)** under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**.
- Its objective is to provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on regional routes to the common man even in small towns.

## **7. First Agriculture Deputies Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group ( Feb. 15, 2023 )**

Agriculture Working Group

The first **Agriculture Representatives Meeting (ADM) of the Agriculture Working Group (AWG)** under the **G20 chairmanship** of India was held in **Indore**.

### **An overview of the news**

- Union Civil Aviation Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** launched it on 14 February 2023.
- On the second day of the meeting, presentations were made on the release note for AWG, covering the **four key themes** of Food Security and Nutrition, Sustainable Agriculture with Climate Smart Approach, Inclusive Agriculture Value Chain and Digitization for Food System and Agriculture Transformation.
- Member countries, invited countries and international organisations made their interventions on the issue note.
- G20 member states and guest countries also held bilateral meetings focusing on the **G20 agriculture agenda**.
- After the technical session, the delegates visited **Silotia village in Dhar district** where they saw organic farming in poly house.
- The key deliverables of the AWG will be discussed on the third and concluding day of the event.
- Mention was made about the 3S template for development in the agriculture sector – ie **Smart, Serve All and Sustainable**.
- Their views were also presented on the importance of drones in the Indian agriculture development saga.

## **8. Prominent Indian-American politician Nikki Haley announces US Presidential bid ( Feb. 15, 2023 )**

US President

Former South Carolina Governor, Indian-American leader and Ambassador to the United Nations **Nikki Haley** announced her candidacy for the **US President** on 14 February.

### **An overview of the news**

- In this way, she has become the first Republican to challenge former US President Donald Trump to become her party's nominee for the White House in 2024.
- Haley, 51, has been a **two-time governor of South Carolina and the US ambassador to the United Nations**.
- Before entering the presidential election, Haley must win the primary vote for the Republican presidential candidate, which begins in January next year.
- The next US presidential election will be held on **November 5, 2024**.

## **About Nikki Haley**

- Helly is the child of migrant **Punjabi Sikh parents**.
- Haley was born in **Bamberg, South Carolina**, and became the **state's first female governor and the first Indian-American** to lead the state.
- If she wins the Republican presidential nomination in 2024, she will make history as the first woman and the **first Asian-American**.

## **9. PM Modi to inaugurate national Aadi Mahotsav on Feb 16 in New Delhi ( Feb. 14, 2023 )**

Aadi Mahotsav

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **national Aadi Mahotsav** on 16th February, 2023 at **Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi**.

### **An overview of the news**

- This **15-day festival** is being organised at the **Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi**.
- This was announced at a media briefing by the Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, **Arjun Munda** in New Delhi.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is making all out efforts to ensure full participation of tribal communities in realising the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- The Minister said that **TRIFED** is working with top designers to ensure quality and contemporary design in tribal products as well as to retain their originality.

### **Theme of Aadi Mahotsav 2023**

- The Theme of the event “**A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture, Cuisine and Commerce**”.
- The theme represents the basic ethos of tribal life.

### **Festival Highlights**

- The festival will feature exhibition-cum-sale of tribal **handicrafts, handlooms, paintings, jewellery, cane and bamboo, pottery, food and natural products**, tribal cuisine and more to showcase it through 200 stalls.
- **One thousand tribal artisans and artists** from **28 states** and union territories will participate in the festival.

### **About Aadi Mahotsav**

- It is a national tribal festival and a joint initiative of the **Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**.
- It was started in the year **2017**.
- **The main objective** of this festival is to acquaint people with the rich and diverse crafts and culture of tribal communities at one place.

### **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**

- It came into existence in **1987**.
- TRIFED is a national-level organisation functioning under the administrative control of the **Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.
- Its Head Office is located in **New Delhi** and has a network of **13 Regional Offices**.
- It aims at **socio-economic development of tribal people** in the country through marketing development of tribal products.

### **10. New Zealand declares national emergency after Cyclone Gabrielle lashes North Island ( Feb. 14, 2023 )**

New Zealand government

The **New Zealand government** has declared a **national emergency** after **Cyclone Gabrielle** hit the North Island.

#### **An overview of the news**

- Cyclone Gabrielle causes widespread **flooding, landslides and huge ocean swells** across the North Island.
- This is an **unprecedented weather event** that is having widespread impacts across much of the **North Island**.
- Gabriel appeared over some small islands about 100 km north-east of Auckland, but is now moving south-west.

#### **National State of Emergency in New Zealand**

- A national state of emergency has been declared in New Zealand on **two previous occasions** - the **first in 2011** after a magnitude 6.3 earthquake in Christchurch and the **second** in the early days of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.